

A

## L E T T E R

TO THE REVEREND

Mr. JOSEPH REEVES,

ON HIS

MEMORIAL OF THE ORDER



Said to be tendered by the

LEGISLATURE,

TO THE

CATHOLICS OF ENGLAND.

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*By the Rev. William Pilling.*

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A  
L E T T E R

TO THE REVEREND

Mr. JOSEPH REEVES, &c.

SIR,

ANY endeavour to restore confidence and harmony among us would be most thankfully received, by the lovers of peace. Is your *View of the Oath*, an attempt to restore peace, or an open declaration of war? I take it to be the latter. You step forth as a peace-maker, as such you ought to be impartial; but you are a party concerned. You offer terms of reconciliation; these are that we should give up every article of contention; your ultimatum is; *Gentlemen, take the oath as explained by the Committee and the Ministers, and we are friends.* Are these terms honourable? Nations at variance make mutual concessions to restore peace. Here the guardians of religion must give up their understandings, and sacrifice their consciences to restore peace, without any guarantee for the observance of stipulated terms. We cannot accept

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of



of your mediation. We consider your pamphlet as a second edition of the *Blue Book*, revised and corrected. It offers no new argument, throws no new light on the subject; we therefore remain inflexible in condemning the oath. We can not take it. Had your attempt succeeded, could we accept of your terms, we should separate from the great body of the Catholic Church. The Irish Bishops have declared against the oath; the Scottish Bishops have done the same; the chief pastor of the church has declared his sentiments as clearly as he can do, without a formal censure. I have vouchers for this. You must know, that of course a formal censure must follow, should we take the oath. Then we should no longer be Catholics, should we persist, but mere *protesting Dissenters*.

What then have you been doing? I will tell you. You have encouraged the Committee to pursue their favourite plan, in spite of any opposition. You say, with them, that the oath is a mere test of civil allegiance; then not even a General Council has a right to interfere. They would think themselves authorised to proceed, notwithstanding any censure from any ecclesiastical authority whatsoever. Thus your endeavours to restore peace are tantamount to an advice to proceed, though the whole world stood against them. You can not surely place such confidence in your reasons, as to think that we should yield and comply. Then we are divided. You will have the honour of contributing to a schism among English Catholics: I hope  
you



you will not make it your boast: for you say, p. 12.  
 " Schism, should it once break out, would be to us  
 " a far more fatal evil than all the penal laws put  
 " together:" Why then contribute your aid to such  
 an evil? Or do you really think that your arguments  
 are sufficiently weighty to make converts of us all?  
 So much the worse. It were better that a few of us  
 should fall; than that we should all be cut off to-  
 gether.

The Committee have told us, in their *Appeal from  
 the censure of the Bishops to the Catholics at large*,  
 p. 4. that " the operation of the Bill is to leave  
 " those ideal numbers of Catholics, who persist to  
 " hold the tenets, in question, to continue victims  
 " to the laws," &c. They do not solicit relief for  
 all the body; they claim it for those only, who make  
 the renunciation in question. *ibid.* This is to be  
 done in the terms of the present oath. Whoever  
 therefore refuses to take the present oath, will be  
 branded with the nickname of Papist, as holding  
 doctrines pernicious to the state, and hostile to the  
 peace of society; and as such will remain a devoted  
 victim to those sanguinary laws which are a disgrace  
 to the nation; though they should renounce and ab-  
 jure all the heterodox doctrines, which calumny or  
 prejudice has affixed to their creed. We find that the  
 number of those, who refuse the oath, is neither  
 ideal nor contemptible. The Committee then have  
 adopted a plan, p. 2. which will procure relief for  
 some, at the expence of the rest, I will venture to  
 say the major part. They pretend, indeed, at pre-  
 sent, that those who refuse the oath will only be on

the same footing as before, and that we need not quarrel among ourselves for temporal concerns. For, Sir, you will please to remark, that the last speech of the Dissenter, in the Dialogue, is the reasoning of one of the Committee in a letter now before me. Indeed every argument of the Dissenter has been made use of, at one time or other, by the abettors of the oath. The answer of the Catholic, *which is not yet refuted*, shews that doctrine to be schismatical. We should indeed remain on the same footing as before, if the hand of power continued lenient as heretofore. But who can answer for that; The Bill, in its operation, appears to be a revival of the penal laws, against all, who refuse the oath; this is evidently supposed in the above quotation from the Committee's letter. The provisos leave us at the mercy of a trading justice of the peace. What hopes then of remaining quiet?

I shall not complain of your harsh treatment, nor will I return your compliments. Thus far you are a Catholic, and I hope will ever remain such; as such I address you. I consider you as far removed from the scene of action, and of course ignorant of many important facts, which throw light on the question; but are not set down in your *original memoirs*. The two laymen, who wrote first on your side of the question, have set out on a different plan; but they are not Catholics. You have adopted another method. We shall want a history of your variations. More of this in its proper place. You say, in the first page of your preface, "Who has  
" been

“ been wrong, and who has been to blame, would  
 “ be useless to enquire.” Yet you enter upon a  
 minute enquiry on the rise and progress of the oath,  
 for no other apparent reason than to clear the Com-  
 mittee, and condemn the Bishops. In some places,  
 your language is harsh, by no means consonant with  
 your protestations of *profound respect for the Church  
 and its pastors.* p. 22. I shall have occasion to notice  
 some of them hereafter. You indeed seem to think  
 that the history of the oath will assist us to form a  
 judgment on its intrinsic merits. It may be a means  
 to inform us of the views of those, who conducted  
 the business: but the oath must stand or fall, by it-  
 self. Whenever an oath of allegiance is proposed,  
 by whomsoever composed or offered, religion then  
 commands us to examine, “ Whether the test be  
 “ conformable to Catholic principles, to Catholic  
 “ faith, and sound morality.” p. 18. This examen  
 is to be made, not from the intent or meaning of the  
 persons who proposed the oath, or conducted the  
 business, but from the wording of it; not from the Bill  
 which enacts it, but from a close inspection into every  
 clause and expression of which it is composed. For  
 every distinct proposition of it, which has not a re-  
 lation to another, stands on its own grounds, and  
 must be approved of or censured from the obvious  
 sense of the words. The Committee have not had  
 recourse to any of these indirect means of informa-  
 tion to pronounce on the oath of James I. or they  
 would have condemned it. Such an unmerciful  
 statute, under that *tolerant and just prince*, as that  
 act



act which prescribes the above oath, was never published, by any of the Pagan Emperors. No, they very properly examined the oath by itself. Let them then be candid, and do the same, by the present oath. We are called upon to swear to the plain, obvious and ordinary sense of the words. This can not be altered, by any circumstances attending the rise and progress of it, nor by any meaning or intention, either of the Ministers or the Committee. If this oath, in its obvious sense, contains nothing but Catholic doctrine, it must be Catholic at Paris, Rome and Constantinople, where the explication is unknown, the same as in London; it will be Catholic doctrine a thousand years hence, when the Blue Book will be forgotten, the same as to day. Strip it then of its foreign trappings, in which it has been ludicrously dressed, by *both the editions* of the Blue Book, and send it abroad; I will venture to assert, that it would be condemned by every Catholic university in the world. This indeed was equivalently granted in the last General Meeting, by the supporters of the oath: but they contended that foreign universities would not understand it as we do. That it could not be translated into any language to the same import as it bears in English. I believe it can not be translated into any language to the meaning which it is said to bear: but the plain, obvious and ordinary meaning of the words may be rendered in any other language; then the meaning which is given to it, is not the plain and ordinary sense of the words, to which only we are called to swear; but a forced

forced explication, foreign to the real import of the terms. We have long been well acquainted with the *ordinary sense* of the words, of which this oath is composed. We want not the assistance of Ministers or Lawyers to inform us how they have, *thus far*, been understood. When we are told, that we must look up to others for the true meaning of *common language*, which is quite familiar to us, we cannot help thinking that we are treated as children, who have not yet learned to read. When it is said, that we must submit to the interpretation of others, we recoil at the absurdity: for of two things one must be the case; either the interpretation of those great men is the obvious and ordinary meaning of the oath, and then we need no explication; or it is not, and in that case we can not take it. This appears so plain to any man of sound judgment, that I am ashamed to insist on it: but it is the main device of our adversaries, *now again*, held forth to ensnare the ignorant. Had I never seen the oath, or any thing written against it, the publications in its defence would effectually have fixed my opinion. These alone are sufficient to condemn it.

These observations will, I apprehend, render it unnecessary to follow you through your historical part, and even though your reasoning on the Oath, as far as page 28, where, at last, you come to examine the wording of it: the only question at issue between us. For, Sir, the object and design of the Oath are not proofs that it is properly worded. As to the nature of it (which I think should mean the import of the words) you inconsistently prove it to be

be purely political, from the act which enjoins it. page 10. "The Act finds us Catholics, it declares "us Catholics, and it leaves us Catholics." This last, Sir, you should have proved; it is what has all along been denied. You go on, "It consequently contains nothing derogating from the "principles of our Catholic profession." What a consequence! If you beg a principle, which you know is denied, what right have you to infer any consequence at all from it? The Bill is of a political tendency; Be it so; Therefore the Oath is? It requires more ingenuity than I am possessed of to see the connection. The Bill of James I. is almost throughout of a religious nature; therefore the Oath therein prescribed is also of a religious nature: Will this be admitted? The Committee's Letter to the Bishops, page 14. calls it a *political Oath*. Had the Legislature substituted the Oath of Supremacy, in place of the present one, would that also be purely political, because the Bill which enacts it is such? Is an Oath, *in which our religious principles on one hand, and our civil rights on the other, are deeply interested*, as you say in the first page, Is it, I say, purely political? If it is of a civil or political nature, because it treats of civil concerns; let it then be also of a religious nature, because it treats of religious matters. As both concerns are equally interested; let it be said to be a mixt Oath; not purely political. Your reasoning then on the nature of the Oath is also foreign to the question.

You



You have composed the history in such a manner as to render it impossible for me to follow you, without descending to personal accusation. This I have all along wished to avoid. I cannot however pass over it, without some remarks. Yet I shall take this occasion to declare, that I mean only to attack measures, not men. Let every one answer to God and his conscience, for his intentions. These I have no business to examine. You, Sir, must know that men setting out with the purest views, should they take a wrong step, or should they be thwarted in their projects, will sometimes emancipate themselves from the shackles of right reason and religion; and it is often difficult to lead them back to the right road.

This supposed, I will tell you, Sir, after reading your account from the *original memoirs*, by which you are guided, *that I do not find one single sentence in the Dialogue, which I now wish had been omitted.* I know well that the protestation sprung from a Protestant quarter, as you say in page 5, but, I believe, it will not be denied, that it had the approbation of the Committee, previous to its being sent to any of the Vicars Apostolic; this is what I remarked and complained of. The two alterations you mention, page 6, are not said to be the only changes, which the Bishops demanded. You represent the affair as if every difficulty had been settled to their entire satisfaction. You should know that the case was otherwise. The Committee wrote to the Bishops to know their sentiments on the protestation, after it was altered; but what attention

was paid to their answers? They ought to have sent the Protestation to them, and requested them to make what alterations they thought necessary. At least they should have altered every clause, against which the Bishops objected. Do your original memoirs say that they did? Then the Protestation was handed about among Protestants, and having been seen by the Ministers, &c. *was not to be altered.* This, Sir, was the plea at the time of both the meetings. You say, page 6. that the Secretary *did not preside at the first meeting*, and he repeatedly *disclaimed any right of giving an opinion on any of the subjects which were agitated at it.* I believe, he did. He made the same protestation at a similar meeting, on the Oath, This he called together, opened the business, and was appealed to as Chairman to maintain order: *this is what I call presiding.* The above protestation of the learned Secretary, if I remember right, is inserted in the Red Book, which he sent for the *instruction* of the Bishops. Not a man in the nation has said, written and done half so much in this business, as this Gentleman, who has not yet formed his opinion on the subject in debate!

Whence the oath arose is a matter of perfect indifference, only the friends of the Committee should not have been so positive in asserting, that no oath would be required. At all events, when it was first offered it should have been sent to the Bishops, for their approbation. This was not done. Indeed, according to their instructions, the Committee ought to have called the body at large together

together, to know if they were willing to submit to a new Oath. But you say, page 8 and 9. the Oath, when altered by the Ministers, " was submitted to " the inspection of the three Ecclesiastical Members of the Committee, the chosen representatives " of the whole Catholic Clergy in England:" this was not sufficient. The transactions about the Protestation had convinced the Committee that, at least two of the three maintained opinions quite different from numbers of the Clergy, and two of the Bishops. All the mischief that has since happened originates in not consulting the Bishops, previous to publishing the Oath, in Woodfall's Diary.

I shall here observe, that every Bishop in Ireland is, by his office, a member of their Committee; while here, we have only three, and these chosen by meetings, nine tenths of which are always Laymen.

The verbal declaration of Mr. Talbot, *p.* 9. that he found nothing in the Oath contrary to faith and good morals, if well understood, makes the case worse than before. I agree with you, *p.* 12. that the Committee had always declared, " that, " if the Oath contained any thing contrary to faith " or the word of God, it must unquestionably " be altered, in every particular, in which it is " objectionable on that account; and all its ambiguities, did it contain any, should be set clear." But it has been a ruling principle, with them, that unless it really contained something contrary to faith or good morals, it might be taken, and should not



be altered. This we have heard repeated from every quarter, whenever occasion required. This you might have read in the red book, before mentioned. These are the words: "Unless your Lord-  
 " ships will undertake to pronounce the Oath here-  
 " tical or contrary to the Word of God, it should  
 " not be altered in one syllable." These are the terms of *deference and respect* in which, you say, *Pref. p. 6.* the Secretary writes, *in his own private capacity*, to the guardians of religion. Yet he has not formed an opinion, on the subject of debate!

I observed in the Dialogue, that it is a very difficult matter to qualify censureable propositions. Certain it is, that a proposition may be condemned as *captious, ensnaring, scandalous, &c.* without being directly contrary to faith or morality. When censured as such, by legal authority, it is then unlawful to maintain it. Why then should the Committee insist on their own qualifications: *heretical or contrary to the Word of God!* Hence Bishop Talbot's verbal declaration, taken in the declared sense of the Committee, only imports, just what it says, *that the Oath is not contrary to faith or the Word of God:* But it does not say, that the Oath is *not ambiguous, does not derogate from the principles of the Catholic Church, does not confound the spiritual and temporal powers together*, as your worthy superior says of it: and as, I trust, I have proved it to be.

To what then does the Protestation of the Committee amount? To no more than this; that the Bishops should either declare the Oath to be down-  
 right

right heretical, or contrary to the Word of God, or otherwise they would not suffer them to amend or alter it. Under these instructions the Bishops had no alternative, but either to condemn or approve of the Oath, *in toto*. You represent the Committee as ready to admit of any alterations, which might be deemed necessary; in this your *memoirs* have deceived you. Arius, Pelagius, or any of the sort might, and have protested that they would change their opinions, if they were heretical.

But they debated the fact afterwards, and contended that their sentiments were not such. So have the Committee. I hope you will not *a second time*, impute to me insinuations, which I never thought of. I attack the cause, and your reasoning, not the persons or intentions of any man. I never thought that the Committee meant to attack religion; but they have in fact done it, though contrary to their intentions; by following, no doubt, evil Counsellors, instead of their Pastors. Even in this stage of the business, though late, let them submit, as they ought, to their Bishops, and request that they would alter the present Oath, or frame a new one, on the same principles, to satisfy all parties, and they will find the Bishops ready to meet them. If they wish to do their duty, they will follow this method. However difficult the task of getting permission for alterations, this must be done, or a schism is inevitable. This, you justly observe, is a greater evil than all the penal laws: and if the Committee are as submissively disposed, as you represent them, they will do it, or give up the cause.

You

You allow, page 11. that the Bishops, in condemning the oath, *acted within their sphere—for they are lawful judges and arbitrators of all religious matters appertaining to doctrine and morals*: in this we agree, and I am happy that we do: none of the Committee Divines have allowed this before. But this decision of the Bishops was of course canonical: then; with what appearance of truth, can you say, page 15. “No where has it appeared, in proof, that a project has been meditated either to elude the force of any canonical decision: or” &c; while you lavish encomiums, page 11. on the success of the Secretary, (*who had not formed an opinion on the subjects in debate*) in effectually setting aside this canonical sentence, in the two districts! If this sentence was regular and canonical, how can you *every where* call this oath *purely political*? if it is such, the Bishops had nothing to do with it.

As to your Assembly on the 3d of February of this year, however respectable or numerous it might be, it consisted, as all their former assemblies have done, of at least nine tenths of laymen; and therefore was incompetent to discuss the sentiments of the Bishops, who were invited to be present. You mention this assembly, in several parts of your work, with as much respect as if it had been a national Council of Bishops; and seem to require an implicit assent to its decisions. What, Are we not only protesting Catholic Dissenters; but all at once Presbyterians, where the voice of the meanest mechanic weighs equal with that of the pastor! You tell us, there was but one dissenting voice! Who would not think



think, that this voice was that of some shopkeeper, or at least some ignorant priest! Who would ever dream that it was the voice of a Bishop! of Mr. Reeves's Bishop? Yet he writes, that he bears him the most profound respect!!! Did your original memoirs tell you who gave this dissenting voice? I hope not. The unanimous consent of all this lay-meeting should not weigh a grain of sand, in your mind, against the dissent of your Bishop: especially after the *canonical censure* passed on the oath, by him and his colleagues in office. *But there were several others there who disapproved of the business.* There were several respectable persons, in town, who did not go to the meeting, because they disapproved of all meetings of the kind. There were others, who did not present themselves, because they supposed the meeting was intended to be between the Committee and the Bishops only, as it really should have been; not to contest their principles, or to debate the question: much less to out-vote them, by a shew of lay-hands: but to learn their duty, and follow the instruction of the pastors appointed by God to teach them. On most other occasions the Secretary of the Committee sent invitations to all the priests, and most of the laymen; but for this time he did not. For this reason I, amongst many others, was not present. Indeed I am not sorry I was not. I think I should not have been pleased to hear a learned and respectable prelate taught his catechism, and out-voted, in a doctrinal question, by a *lay-assembly*; for such I will call it, notwithstanding the number of Clergymen present. I shall examine, in  
another

another place, whether the alteration adopted, in this lay-synod, has amended the oath.

By the rest of your pamphlet, I should think that you, Sir, *who bear so much respect to the Church and her pastors*, would have been grieved to see so many laymen hold up their hands against a Bishop: but my surprise is great indeed, when I read the accusation of *sallies of intemperate language* against him, p. 12. Where are they, Sir? He has only attacked measures, not men. Is this the profound respect you bear to your pastor? Again, how you talk of the Committee's appeal from the canonical sentence of the Bishops, to the Catholics at large? What encomiums do you pass on that flimsy performance? *Yet no project has been formed to elude the force of any canonical sentence*; Was it not purposely calculated to stir up rebellion against the pastors of the Church? Did it not raise those alarming convulsions you mention, in the same page 12.? Yes, Sir, this alone was the cause of those symptoms of a schism among us, which your *View of the Oath* will not remove. Had every one submitted to the *canonical decision* of the Bishops, as in duty bound, where was the danger? But they endeavoured to set aside that sentence?

You say, page 11. "The Secretary of the Committee immediately used his best endeavours to persuade their Lordships to concur in making such alterations as they should judge necessary, for the admissibility of the oath," &c. Who would not imagine, from this, that these alterations were left to the Bishops? You go on: "He himself proposed

“ fed to the prelate of the North fuch as he thought  
 “ would answer all their objections!” This was  
 wonderful in a person who had not formed an opi-  
 nion on the matter. But, “ nothing was concluded  
 “ on.” Your memoirs in this have led you aftray.  
 He did not apply to all the Bifhops. He did not  
 offer fufficient alterations; and he knew well what  
 alterations would have fatisfied the Bifhops; but he  
 would not accept of them. This is the reason why  
 nothing was concluded on.

You then examine the fubftance and general ten-  
 dency of the oath, in which it is, as I before ob-  
 ferved, unnecessary for me to follow you. Some  
 remarks may fuffice. You fay, page 14. “ The re-  
 “ fpectable afsembly of the 3d of February has de-  
 “ clared the oath to be unobjectionable. Is it ra-  
 “ tional, or is it not, to acquiefce in their folemn  
 “ declaration?” I answer, were we Prefbyterians,  
 we might fubmit: as Catholics we can not, without  
 the concurrence of our Bifhops. It was a lay  
 afsembly, incompetent to decide on the bufinefs.  
 Two of the three Bifhops, one prefent, were known  
 to be againft the decifion. The alteration propofed  
 however was no amendment, as I fhall prove later.  
 Then the former *canonical fentence* of the Bifhops  
 remained in full force. An appeal to this afsembly  
 was illegal; its fentence was not canonical; it was  
 an attempt to fet afide a fentence that was legal and  
 regular.

Page 16. “ It is now upwards of a year that our  
 “ proteftation, in terms and fubftance the fame as  
 “ the oath, has been figned and laid before the  
 D “ nation.



“ nation. Has any sinister construction been put  
 “ upon it? Has it been received and considered in  
 “ any other than a civil light:” &c. Indeed, Sir,  
 this is strange language held forth to people that can  
 read. The oath is neither in terms nor substance the  
 same as the protestation. Three clauses of the oath,  
 which have been objected to, are not hinted at in  
 the protestation. If no difficulty has been found in  
 it, whence all this disturbance among us? But even  
 several Protestants, some equally versed in constitu-  
 tional disquisitions with any in the nation, have une-  
 quivocally declared, that we might as well conform,  
 at once, as take this oath. You will please to recol-  
 lect, that “ the form of the oath differs much from that  
 “ of the protestation, that for want of the preamble it  
 “ was become obscure:” &c. these are nearly your  
 own words, *p.* 9. and I suppose you are one of those  
 Catholics at a distance from the metropolis, who  
 made these remarks; at least you do not seem to  
 blame those who did. How does this agree with  
 the other quotation? This oath then, stripped of the  
 preamble, is neither in form, nor terms, nor substance  
 the same as the protestation: but stands on its own  
 intrinsic merits; by which only it must be judged.

Whatever encomiums you may think proper to  
 pass on the Committee, which I have not even a  
 wish to call in question, we can not bind ourselves,  
 on their authority, by an oath, which is so *captious*,  
 &c. which has been formally condemned, by our  
 Bishops, censured, by the Scottish and Irish Bishops,  
 and also, by the Sovereign Pontiff.

I had

I had observed, that the term *Dissent* always implied *priority* and *majority* in what is dissented from. To this you think a sufficient answer is given, page 20. You suppose that the Lords, who voted against the Bill of Henry VIII. would have been stiled Dissenting. Without doubt. But even here, they had both priority and majority against them. It was against an Act of Parliament that they dissented, and entered their protest; and this act had priority and majority for it. The subsequent remarks you make, *ibid.* are totally wide of the question, unless you prove the words *dissent* and *differ*, when applied to religion, to be *synonymous*; which you never will do, till one or other change their obvious and ordinary meaning. But, "The term, that is applicable to the individuals of the Catholic Church, can not always, with propriety, be applied to the Church itself:" page 21. Not when you speak of them as men or individuals; but when the term is applicable to them, only on account of their religion, then it may equally be applied to the Church. The denomination of *English Catholic* is a compound of a substantive and adjective, the former of which, by use and custom, is only applied to a man on account of the place of his nativity, the substantive being understood, and means no more than *an Englishman who is a Catholic*.

But the term *Dissenters* being only applicable to persons, on account of their new invented religion, to shew that they are not Papists; it is a flat contradiction to the term Catholic. To refute what you

say, *ibid.* that, it is *not of our own choosing*, I refer you to the Dialogue, and to the Committee's appeal to the Catholics, page 2.

Page 23. You tell us that the oath, in the opinion of Lawyers, Senators and Statesmen, "contains  
" not a single syllable, which in the plain and obvious acceptance of the words, taken continuedly together in the context, affects either the spiritual authority of the Church, or the spiritual prerogatives of the Pope. It *therefore* leaves our religious tenets untouched, it intrenches upon no point of faith; it lays no controul on the freedom of speculative opinions, which neither concern the state," &c. What a *therefore*! From the opinions of those persons, you infer the fact! Can not they be mistaken? Is it rational to believe them, in preference to all the British and Irish Bishops, and the Vicar of Christ also! See the Dialogue, page 29.

I have already told you, that your principle from which you draw this bad consequence, is not true, and this is known to many Catholics in London. I might add, that the oath abjures and rejects a speculative opinion, the infallibility of the Pope, *as a pernicious doctrine*, which yourself says, is *wholly harmless, and unconnected with every social and moral duty of a Christian.* p. 46. Your gloss, upon the misconstruction of Protestants, does not change the nature of this opinion. It is still true that we renounce it; therefore the oath does controul our freedom in this speculative opinion.



Page 25. you tell us, that "in the preamble of  
 " the Bill all the disclaimed doctrines are promif-  
 " cuously stiled *pernicious*," and then: "This poli-  
 " tical tendency to do hurt being the only motive  
 " assigned, by the legislature, for rejecting those  
 " doctrines, the rejection extends only to the point,  
 " where the tendency exists, and no farther." From  
 these principles you very consistently infer, pages  
 45. and 46. that the infallibility of the Pope is only  
 rejected, in as much as we deny him to have a right  
 to *command* any thing unlawful, &c. So that

This proposition; *I solemnly swear that I acknow-  
 ledge no infallibility in the Pope*, means only, *I swear,  
 that he has no right to command me to do an unlawful  
 action*. Is not this a mental restriction? Do Prote-  
 stants understand it so? Do Catholics? Have the  
 Committee themselves understood it in that sense?  
 See their Appeal, p. 3. and the Dialogue, p. 67. No,  
 Sir, every one, till your pamphlet appeared, has in-  
 variably understood, that the oath abjured that very  
 infallibility which you describe as harmless, p. 46,  
 as the plain words import; *no infallibility*; I can  
 not then admit of any infallibility whatever, without  
 perjury. This, Sir, is another specimen of your  
 variations.

The preamble of the before mentioned Bill of the  
*hypocritical and intolerant James I.* supposes that  
 diverse persons frequent Church service to avoid the  
 penalties of the laws, the intention of the subse-  
 quent sections is the better to discover such persons.  
 Is this preamble to determine the sense of every fol-  
 lowing

lowing clause? even those of the oath therein ordered to be taken; as well as of the oath of supremacy, prescribed, by the 20th section of this act, to be taken, by all, who have been reconciled to the See of Rome when abroad, within six days after their return? What absurdity!

I now come to that part of your work, which is the only real difficulty between us; the examination of your reasoning, on the different clauses of the oath.

The first clause is, not only a profession of allegiance, but moreover a declaration of *right*, and this upon oath. I have not noticed this; and therefore will not suppose that you hint at me. However I have heard some very sensible persons object even to this clause, on account of that declaration. The *right*, they have said, of every Prince in the world, is foreign to a profession of allegiance; is a question, which not one in a thousand of any nation can ascertain, much less swear to; and therefore should not be inserted. You say, page the first, "In an  
" oath——every thing most certainly ought to be  
" expressed, in a clear and satisfactory manner, to  
" those who take it. The sense should be distinctly  
" placed within the reach of their capacity; and  
" strictly confined to the object it has in view."  
Whether this declaration of *right* is such, I leave to others to determine. I trust the other parts of this oath have been proved to be neither *clear* nor *satisfactory*.

The

The act of settlement is of a more serious nature. You seem as if you wished to draw me into treason. You shall not. I am ready to swear allegiance, as in duty bound, to his present Majesty, though a Protestant; and shall ever be ready to do the same to his lawful successors, though Protestants. This is not the debate between us. Whether the British parliament has or has not a right, to deprive a man of his estate, kingdom or life on account of his religion, I have not pretended to determine. It has done it: and by this Act whoever becomes a Catholic, gives up his right to the crown. This is not the debate between us. I have said, and here repeat, that, while the oath stands, the act of settlement cannot be repealed, without stigmatizing a whole nation with the guilt of perjury. To all this you say not one word; but frame an argument for me, which I had no thought of; and then exult in the discovery!

In the discussion on the word *heretical*, p. 32, you have adopted a new plan. Another specimen of your variations. All your predecessors employed or supported, by the Committee, have invariably had recourse to the distinction of *material and formal* heresy. This distinction you justly call unsatisfactory, p. 32. It is now defined *legal* heresy. This is a new sort of heresy of which we have not heard. By a Statute in the first of Elizabeth, it is enacted, that nothing shall be accounted heresy, but what is determined as such, by the canonical Scriptures, the four first general Councils, or shall hereafter be deemed such by Parliament, with the consent of the  
Clergy



Clergy in their Convocation. So I suppose were the doctrines of transubstantiation, invocation of saints, purgatory, &c. declared heretical, by the last mentioned authority, any one might lawfully swear that they are heretical, in the plain, obvious and ordinary sense of the word: after what you have said on the infallibility of the Pope, I might infer that you would swear it: but, I hope, you would not find one to follow you.

But, Sir, in what Parliament, *with the consent of the Convocation*, has the *deposing doctrine* been declared heretical? If you cannot clear this point, as I believe you never will, then that doctrine is not heretical, even in your own sense of the word. To *suppose* it heretical, because the oath prescribed by Parliament, has the term, is not enough; we must have a *formal decision* that the doctrine is heretical, given by Parliament, with the consent of the Convocation. The words of the Statute quoted by yourself are; "Or such as shall  
" be *ordered, judged, or determined* to be heresy, by  
" the high Court of Parliament, with the consent  
" of the Clergy in their Convocation," therefore even a *declaration* of Parliament without the consent of the Convocation cannot make it heresy. It is not then even legally heretical.

I come now to the examination of the amended clause. In the oath it stands thus: " That no  
" foreign Prince, Prelate, &c. hath, or ought to  
" have any civil jurisdiction or authority whatso-  
" ever within this realm, or any spiritual authority,  
" power

" power or jurisdiction whatsoever within this realm,  
 " that can directly or indirectly, affect or interfere  
 " with the independence, sovereignty, laws or con-  
 " stitution of this kingdom, or with the civil or  
 " ecclesiastical government thereof, as by law esta-  
 " blished; or with the rights, liberties, persons,  
 " or properties of the subjects thereof." In the pro-  
 testation, to which you tell us it is altered, it is as  
 follows: " No Church, nor any Prelate, &c. hath,  
 " or ought to have any jurisdiction or authority  
 " whatsoever within this realm, that can directly or  
 " indirectly affect, or interfere with the indepen-  
 " dence, sovereignty, laws, constitution, or govern-  
 " ment thereof," &c. as in the oath. When I  
 wrote the Dialogue I did not notice the difference,  
 because I thought it would strike every one, on the  
 slightest inspection, that the sense was tantamount  
 in both the expressions. Does not, *no authority*  
*whatsoever*, say as much as, *no civil or spiritual*  
*authority whatsoever*? The Committee's appeal, p. 5.  
 will set us right. *The words* (in the protestation)  
*any and whatsoever*, are surely tantamount to the  
 words, *any jurisdiction, spiritual or temporal*; in the  
 oath. So that they meant no amendment in the al-  
 teration, nor in fact is there any. All my objections  
 therefore are still in full force against the pretended  
 amendment, as you have not attempted to refute  
 them. The government here comprehends both *civil*  
*and ecclesiastical*, so that the present oath is in sense  
 and substance exactly the same as before.

Its obvious intent, you say, p. 38. is only to dis-  
 claim the power of the Pope over *temporals* in the

E

Christian

*Christian world:* Be it so. But as it evidently goes farther than *it intended*, and disclaims also the rights of the primacy, which he holds from God alone, we cannot admit of it.

But we have signed the protestation. We did sign it, with the preamble, which was said to fix the meaning, with a number of assurances and explications, to declare the precise sense, in which we did sign it. The oath is now to be taken on its own intrinsic merits: it stands alone. You say yourself, *p. 9. Catholics at a distance.*—— “could not but observe that the form of the oath differed much from that of the protestation; that for want of the preamble it was become obscure; that there was, in fine, an ambiguity of expression,” &c. They considered the plain and obvious sense of the words, and which the history of the oath cannot alter. What pity! that we should ever have signed any protest, in an explained sense, which was to be transferred to an oath, which is to be taken in the obvious and ordinary sense, in which it is worded; and therefore independent of any explication, or secret reservation whatsoever.

The quotation from the Lovain Doctors, *p. 38.* is hardly orthodox: It is not true, *that the Church cannot subject the State to any restraints or modifications.* She can subject the State to the observance of her laws and censures: these may be severe restraints. The Lovain Doctors were then five in number, sent by the Emperor to teach *his doctrines*, not those of the Church. Such they were declared, by the Cardinal Archbishop of Mechlin,  
in



in a Synodical examen of their principles. I have his account of this synod, by me. The rest of the reasoning on this head is a repetition of the Blue Book, refuted in the Dialogue.

On the article of the oaths, p. 42. you labour hard to prove that this clause in the oath only refers to oaths between man and man, because it has a reference to the accusation lodged against us, *that no oaths can bind us*: and therefore must be understood in a civil sense only, or it would be no answer to the objection, &c. Pray, Sir, did an answer never go beyond the objection? Did you never see or hear of an answer, which added much of extraneous matter to the question? Now, Sir, this is precisely the case in debate between us. I contend that the answer, besides what is necessary to satisfy the objection in its fullest extent, superadds not only what is unnecessary, but even what is evidently unlawful to advance; and this I prove from the plain, obvious and ordinary sense of the answer: you contend that it must be understood of civil oaths only, because the objection is started on that ground: thus you turn to the question to find out the sense of the answer. This may be necessary to find out the main object of both; but it will never prove that the answer does not say more than was necessary: nor will it prove that the unnecessary part of it is not erroneous. This reasoning will destroy the force of your arguments on every objectionable clause of the oath. You almost every where reason from what you suppose was meant; but scarce ever from the real import of the words.

But *ibid.* you say, "the word *compact*—sufficiently indicates the nature and object of the oaths mentioned close before."

This is a sort of an attempt to reason from the context, but alas! What a reason! Had it been said conjunctively, that no power can dispense in *oaths and compacts*; *perhaps* then it might have been understood only of compacts confirmed by oath. But, Sir, at it stands, it is evidently disjunctive; and denies a power of dispensing in either one, or the other, "can, at any time, dispense with, or absolve me from the obligations of this oath, *or of any other oath, or of any compact whatsoever.*"

You see here a flat and universal negation of any power to dispense in *any oath*, evidently distinct from the power of dispensing in compacts. *This oath, or any other oath* surely imports a difference between this oath, and every other: so also, *any other oath, or from any compact*, most certainly imports a difference between oaths and compacts.

These words therefore import an universal negation of the right of any *authority on earth to dispense in any oath whatsoever.* This is precisely what I have advanced in the Dialogue: and has universally been supposed and granted, by the Committee Divines, whenever called upon, or whenever they attempted to explain this exceptionable clause. The only excuse they have held forth to save themselves from error, on account of oaths made to God, has been the fallacious reasoning of the Dissenter, in the Dialogue, *p.* 33. They have invariably sup-  
posed

posed and granted, 1. that the oath, as it stands, abjures every power to dispense in any oath whatsoever; 2. That oaths made to God are not comprehended in this oath, because such *oaths are vows*; see the Committee's appeal, p. 7. I am ashamed of the Bull. 3. That no power can dispense, in any oath between man and man. You, Sir, very unwisely differ from your brethren in the two first points: and to support your more absurd hypothesis, accuse me of *garbling*, to make the oath say what it does not say. Whether I am rightly accused of garbling, or you of jumbling together things totally different, I leave to be determined, by any one, who has the least recollection of his *Logic*. This, at all events, is another specimen of your variations. I wonder how the Committee can adopt your principles, or patronise your pamphlet, since it contains so many doctrines diametrically opposite to what they have, thus far, maintained. But error cannot be consistent.

You ask one question, p. 43. and then retire in triumph: "Were he (myself) as eager to abjure  
 " the Pope's dispensing power over oaths made to  
 " God alone, as he is positive that it is here absurd;" (I suppose this to be a typographical error, and that in place of *absurd* a term equivalent to *expressed* should be inserted) "would he be satisfied with the  
 " manner, in which he now supposes it to be  
 " here expressed." Indeed, Sir, this is all of a piece with the rest of your reasoning. But to give you a direct answer, I will honestly tell you, that I shall ever be content with an universal negation,  
 when



when any particular contradictory is to be denied. I am quite astonished that you should raise a difficulty about the matter. From my earliest acquaintance with logic, I was taught and believed, that whoever said, *no man is an ass*, said just as much, as he who said, *neither Peter, nor Paul, &c. is an ass*; so likewise he who says, *no power on earth can dispense with the obligation of any oath*, says as much, though he says more, as he who says, *no power on earth can dispense in any oath made to God alone*: for, Sir, a particular negative, is always included in its universal alternant. You force me to logic. I have the *first edition* of the Blue Book, and all the Committee Divines to support me in this particular. If they wish not to add to the number of *variations* already hinted at, they will support me, even against their last champion.

But, Sir, in regard of oaths, I have not done with you; you unequivocally deny every dispensing power in any oath between man and man. Indeed, in this, you consistently agree with your predecessors of the same stamp; because all such oaths are *civil*.

I had mentioned, in the Dialogue, *p. 54.* a very *uncivil* oath extorted by fraud or violence, and had asserted, that although the tie of justice was done away, by the means employed to extort the oath; yet the religious obligation contracted thereby, if any is contracted, which must be the case when the oath is valid, could not be loosed but by dispensation. In this, Sir, I have done nothing, but barely explain the universal doctrine of the Catholic Church. How dare you to contradict that doctrine?

You

You have not attempted to answer me; but have throughout supposed me in the wrong. We knew what the Blue Book had said before; and indeed, it is expressed in clearer and more expressive terms than the *second edition* of it: but you only repeat it. I had started objections against the Blue Book; instead of answering them, you faintly re-affert the *erroneous doctrine* contained in it, without proof, or explication, or answer.

You do not attempt to justify the oath in the two articles of *absolution at the will of a priest*, and *not keeping faith with heretics*, &c. You might here with equal justice, have accused me of *garbling to make the oath say what it does not say*. For whereas the oath says, *heretic or infidel*, I have only extracted the word *infidel*, p. 52. because I allow of no breach of faith with heretics; but conscious of the fallacy of your own reasoning; *feeling* that he who denied a breach of faith with *infidel* or *heretic*, denied it to be lawful with either, even separately taken; you therefore pass over whatever I have said, without notice; as you have also done the greatest part of the Dialogue. I conclude then, *you could not answer it*.

I have already noticed the dangerous doctrine you hold out from page 45. concerning the sense, in which you are ready to abjure the infallibility of the Pope: I shall only add here, that if the false notions of Protestants concerning that doctrine, authorise you to renounce and abjure it, in the *plain, obvious, and ordinary sense*, yet with this *mental restriction*;

*in that sense only, in which they have erroneously conceived it; you might equally abjure transubstantiation, or any other Catholic tenet, which they have equally represented in odious and pernicious colours. That is; I abjure all the errors and mischiefs attributed to the doctrine, but not the doctrine itself; although the words plainly and obviously should abjure the doctrine itself, on account of these supposed errors. This doctrine, Sir, is evidently founded on equivocation and mental restriction, which is also abjured by the oath. I will only add, that I as sincerely abjure and detest this your doctrine as I do that of Luther; and in this I have the whole Catholic world with me.*

Before I take my leave, I will tell you, that we hear from the friends of the Committee, that they are determined to bring the Bill into Parliament, in the ensuing Session. Then let those take the oath who can, and the rest may take their chance. We have heard members of the Committee declare their satisfaction, on reflecting on the present critical and dangerous situation of our affairs; adding, *the present oath will shew who are Papists; and those who dare avow themselves such, let them suffer according to the laws, as they deserve.* They have been silent since the *lay-synod* of the 3d of February: At the General Meeting in May, they declined entering on the debate; on a motion of thanks for *their judicious exertions* in the Catholic cause. Three Gentlemen present objected to the motion; because they thought that the exertions of the Committee were



were not *judicious*. These exertions have set aside the authority of our pastors; have brought us to the fatal dilemma of renouncing our religion, or of being stigmatized as disaffected subjects: they have sown the seeds of a schism among us, which will inevitably end in a separation from the Catholic Church: such exertions can hardly be stiled *judicious*. However those Gentlemen were not suffered to proceed; but were told that the oath was out of the question. This may serve as a specimen of the *freedom of debate* allowed at their meetings. We may suppose, that, as the question had been finally decided, in their *General Council* of the 3d of February, they would not suffer it to be debated a second time. In these circumstances can we conscientiously suffer ourselves to be guided, by those, who have thus *exerted* themselves? Are we to forget that we can read, and implicitly trust to the forced explanations of common language? Shall we lay aside our divinity, and begin to study it again upon different principles? Shall we submit to take, for our masters and teachers, laymen and lawyers? We have indeed heard much boasting of the privileges of common sense, and much declamation against theological accuracy. These principles are the groundwork of the Reformation, projected in Germany, Hungary and France, as well as in England. But this supposition necessarily involves two others: 1. That common sense is the last tribunal to decide on the religion of Christ; which is not true. 2. That theological accuracy is in opposition to *real* com-

mon sense. This indeed has been asserted, with much confidence: but as it came chiefly from a quarter, where a *more dangerous study* has made deep and lasting impressions, we may suppose that this will not be taken upon credit.

I shall here take leave of your pamphlet. I am sorry to be condemned to the task of *reviewing* your *View*. It is not your fault if you have been deceived in certain facts, by unfaithful memoirs. But, Sir, you should have reviewed your arguments; for I will aver that I never read a pamphlet so replete with fallacy. A friend of mine, and your's too, till he saw your pamphlet, writes to me as follows: "I have read the flimsy attack made upon you, by Mr. Reeve, who ought never to have written to preserve the favourable opinion I entertained of him."

As I have not the honour of your acquaintance, I hope you will consider this necessary self-defence as levelled at your publication, not at your person. You, Sir, have, till now, justly enjoyed a considerable reputation even as a writer. I have dipped into your publications with pleasure and profit too. May you long continue to exhibit these laudable exertions, in the cause of religion. One thing is yet wanting, and which we have a right to expect from you; you possess a considerable share of the Committee's confidence; you vouch for their docility; then, Sir, exert yourself for the sake of peace, persuade them to join with the Bishops, and leave them to make such alterations as *they* shall judge necessary.

Write

Write to the leaders among them; tell them, in the language of an orthodox old missionary, that they are *in duty bound* to submit to their pastors, appointed by *legal authority*; tell them, that they must not pretend to cite them before a *Lay-Council*; they must not bully them, nor out-vote them by a shew of hands sacrilegiously and schismatically lifted up against them, in doctrinal points, of which *they only* are competent judges. Tell them to point out what they wish to have couched, in the oath, and then leave the wording of it to the Bishops. That, if they can not get these alterations accepted, the cause must be dropped for the present, for the sake of peace; and that a *schism* otherwise inevitable, is a *far greater evil, than all the penal laws*. If they hear you, you will gain your brethren; if not, you will then see that they have deceived you: and that their protestations are only made to ensnare.

I am, REV. SIR,

With due Respect, &c.

*William Pilling.*



[illegible]

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62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 88